



The Bugler

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Virginia Defense Force

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ON MISSION

The Virginia Defense Force is moving to the FUTURE!!!! Your individual participation in the organization has been the KEY to our success. Our volunteer force has increased to nearly 1,000 from 505 in August 2006.

The VDF has been accepted by Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, the Virginia National Guard Adjutant General, as a professional and capable response force to augment the Virginia National Guard after disasters throughout the Commonwealth based on our increased capabilities in (1) interoperable communications, (2) less than lethal security, (3) emergency medical triage, and (4) in-land river operations.



Now that our organization is approaching 1,000 members, retention is the KEY based on individual leadership, innovative Drill and FTX training, and mentorship of our members to continue moving to the FUTURE.

I appreciate your individual efforts and challenge each of you to be a leader, become qualified in your position, do your job, and support your chain of command.

Our next goal for this year is to reach 1,100 by December and have all units manned at a minimum 75% of personnel requirements to become more capable for disaster response for 24/7 operations.

Keep up the great work in your units in the communities!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

MILITARY POLICE COMPANY CONDUCTS CIVIL DISTURBANCE TRAINING

On April 3 through 5, the Military Police Company held its 2009 spring field training exercise at the Petersburg armory. The intensive training started on Friday night with preparation of riot control equipment and establishing a bivouac area for the weekend. Saturday began with a riot baton class led by 1st Lt. Thom Rudiger and the remainder of the day involved the troops learning and practicing the riot control formations that would be used in a practical exercise on Sunday.

The Richmond Area Salvation Army Disaster Services canteen was on-hand to prepare breakfast and lunch on Saturday as a joint training with the company. Several of their volunteers spent the night on cots right along-side the MP Company's 47 troops.



MP Company on line

On Sunday, the company conducted a practical exercise with an opposing force of "civil unrest." This OPFOR provided realism. At this point though, we are not sure who had the most fun, the MPs with the control formation, or the rowdy group tossing water balloons and swinging padded sticks!

In the past several years, the company had trained with, and augmented Virginia National Guard units in their annual Military Assistance for Civil Disturbance training. With the Virginia National Guard units deployed or preparing to deploy overseas, the company conducted its own training this year.

Aviation Battalion Expects the Unexpected

By Lt. Col. Harry F. Tatum
Commander, Aviation Battalion

It was a clear April day, ideal conditions for the Aviation Battalion Spring MUTA. On Thursday evening, 6:00 pm, Maj. Lawrence Hardwicke, the Executive Officer, notified the troops they were to report to their home airfields on Saturday with their three-day basic loads for transport from the Lynchburg Airport. Thus began the Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise.

The drill was to be the unexpected with rapid relocation of the entire battalion to an unused airfield and, upon arrival, set up flight operations. The field chosen was the remote Campbell County Airport, which is primarily used for training flights and provides some unique challenges.

On Saturday, B Company, commanded by Lt. Nancy Snow, was diverted to the Campbell County Airport while en route to Lynchburg from Danville as an advance party. Then, at 8:30 a.m., after the opening formation, inspection and safety briefing, the remaining units were briefed on the exercise.

Shortly thereafter, the first aircraft departed, initiating a Battalion wide airlift from four differing locations. At its height, the battalion aircraft were landing every seven minutes at the Campbell County Airport. Upon arrival, the troops were assigned specific operational tasks or engaged in additional training.

Col. Mroczkowski, the brigade commander, attended the drill to observe and evaluate the operation. He and the operations chief planner, Maj. Jim McGee, broadly deemed the operation a success.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The State Guard Association Annual Meeting
Hosted by SGAUS Virginia Chapter & VA Defense Force
Registration forms can be obtained online at
www.sgaus.org

Black Horse Brigade Supports Winchester Apple Blossom Festival 2009

During the last weekend of April, the Black Horse Brigade, Task Force 33 conducted support operations to the city of Winchester police. With expanded force capability and size, the decision was made to support the Apple Blossom Festival through a Battalion Task Force and Company operation, or TF 33, built around the 33rd Battalion with organic units plus two attached composite companies.

Planning and coordination with the Winchester Police Department, VANG 3rd battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment and VDF was conducted starting in January. Initial concept and warning order were briefed on February 21 during the Black Horse Brigade muster. After Brigade approval, TF33 developed the Operation Plan for issuance at the company commanders briefing in Winchester in March. Following issuance of the Operations Plan, units conducted reconnaissance of their sectors, identified Command Posts, Logistics Release Points, Casualty Collection/Ambulance Exchange Points and verified communications linkage.

Reviewing Communication Procedures During ABF

Capt. McMichael,
3/116th Inf., VANG
and Sgt. Martin,
33rd Bn., VDF



Initially mobilizing at their home station on April 30, the next day units travelled to Winchester for pre-operation activities. By 11:00 a.m., 121 personnel had completed appropriate screenings and briefings and had been sworn as special deputies for the city of Winchester. In addition to crowd and traffic control, and situational awareness for the city, a Color Guard was provided for each parade.

(See 'Black Horse Brigade' - page 3)

HIGHLAND BRIGADE EXPANDS NIMS CAPABILITY**BY Maj. Rick McCraw****Assistant S-3, Highland BDE**

The Highland Brigade is conducting a spring MUTA that will be quite unlike anything they have prepared for in the past. The decision was made to use this MUTA to test The Highland battalion's readiness to be deployed for state active duty. Each battalion will also train their enlisted troops in a variety of NIMS Unit Capability courses. Battalion training is slated to include 'Less than Lethal' security, Triage and first aid, Map and Compass reading, Land Navigation, and Search and Rescue. Concurrently, the battalion staff will be involved in a tabletop field training exercise (Operation Shamrock) that incorporates the use of the NIMS Incident Command structure to manage a large forced evacuation of civilians from the Northern Virginia area.

Each battalion will report to their respective armory in anticipation of receiving a mission. In preparation they will complete the in-processing paperwork for SAD. Didactic training will begin Friday evening with field training exercises planned for the enlisted troops on Saturday. All three battalions and the HHC are taking their troops to the field for the practical aspects of their exercises.

Each battalion will focus on different mission essential skills for their training. Whereas the Brigade HHC will focus on Land Navigation and GPS use, the 34th Battalion will focus on First Aid. The 24th Battalion will be conducting less than lethal security training, map, compass and GPS use. The 31st Battalion will be focusing on Search and Rescue. Operation Shamrock will involve most of the brigade and battalion staffs and will be focused on skills acquired in the ICS300 course. Those who have not had ICS 300 should be able to take existing VDF training, for example OSC3, and improvise solutions to the problems the field training exercise will set forth. The Brigade's S6 shop will coordinate the net and will be communicating digitally. In addition, each battalion's '4 shop' will be responsible for feeding and housing their troops with Brigade coordination if needed. The brigade commander, executive officer, and S3 will visit each battalion's command post and will be observing the exercise as evaluators.

This MUTA presents a number of challenges but in many ways it may be one of the most real world scenarios the brigade has faced. The brigade's leadership expects to obtain key learning from the exercise while challenging the troops with some very rewarding and meaningful training.

Black Horse Brigade

Task Force 33 deployed into sectors and secured the parade route and other TCPs as requested by the Winchester PD for both the children's race and Fireman's Parade during Friday afternoon and evening. That afternoon a major incident occurred in the 13th Battalion composite company sector; a house fire and diesel-electric locomotive derailment with leakage of diesel fuel. The Winchester PD requested that the company extend its operations to include control of traffic and pedestrians in the area of the incident. The company immediately reacted and performed the mission without any problems. At the close of the days operations, all units recovered to the Winchester Armory where a personnel and equipment check was conducted.

On early Saturday morning, May 2, Task Force 33 deployed to support the annual 10K race. When the race ended, the companies redeployed in preparation for the Grand Feature Parade, which was conducted Saturday afternoon. All operations were successfully concluded early Saturday evening and the companies moved back to the Winchester Armory under company control after release by the TF commander.